

The Seventh-day Adventist Church said Friday it will discipline...

By DAVID E. ANDERSON, UPI Religion Writer



WASHINGTON -- The Seventh-day Adventist Church said Friday it will discipline or fire some 95 denomination officials involved in loaning church funds to bankrupt developer Donald Davenport.

Davenport, a surgeon, investor and post office builder, filed for bankruptcy in Los Angeles on July 22, 1981, owing various church entities \$21 million, \$3 million of it in accrued interest.

A 15-member 'President's Review Commission' set up by church leaders investigated the activities of individuals involved in the loans and recommended the disciplinary measures.

Church officials said the penalties range from a private letter of administrative disapproval to 'permanent dismissal from denominational employment.'

In the cases of some of those penalized, 'withdrawal of their ministerial credentials and/or annulment of their ordination, where appropriate, also will be considered,' Neal Wilson, world president of the 580,000 member denomination, said.

Wilson said the names of those reprimanded will be published in the 'Adventist Review,' the denomination's weekly magazine.

'While some individuals have been cleared of any wrongdoing, the church will further investigate the conduct of a limited number of other officers,' the church said in a statement.

'This is by far the most sweeping discipline ever attempted within the Seventh-day Adventist Church,' Wilson said, 'but in no way is this church coming to a standstill, nor will the Davenport case become a disaster even though it has been extremely unfortunate.'

Factors considered by the review commission in deciding on the action to be taken included the individual's position in the church, whether the church's financial policies had been violated, the extent to which an individual influenced others to loan money to Davenport and whether the individual had a personal loan with Davenport or special considerations from Davenport.

Wilson said the disciplinary recommendations of the commission, which have been endorsed by the 25 top church officials, complete the first half of the group's work.

The commission also is to make recommendations on policy procedures to prevent similar situations from occurring.

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